



Aquidneck Island Reuse Planning Authority

Representing the municipalities of Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 7, 2010

1 p.m.

LOCATION: Middletown Police Station Community Room

Attendees:

Jan Eckhart, Secretary, *Town of Middletown*
Keith Humphreys, *Town of Portsmouth*
Dick Adams, *Town of Middletown*
Fred Faerber, *Town of Portsmouth*
Bill Corcoran, *City of Newport*
Naomi Neville, *City of Newport*
Bob Gilstein, *Town of Portsmouth*
Paige Bronk, *City of Newport*
Ed Lavallee, *City of Newport*
Ron Wolanski, *Town of Middletown*
Tina Dolen, *AIPC*
Ted Clement, *Aquidneck Land Trust*
John Riendeau, *Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation*
Jared Rhodes, *Statewide Planning*
Peter Healey, *RIDOT*
Julie Oakley, *AIRPA*
Rich Tenga, *OEA*
Capt. Stan Dietrich, *OEA*
Craig Seymour, *RKG Associates, Inc.*
David Knisely, *Garrity and Knisely, LLC*
Alan Shears

Meeting called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Julie Oakley, Aquidneck Island Reuse Planning Authority (AIRPA), Property Reuse Coordinator, welcomed the meeting attendees and explained that because Art Weber was elected to the Middletown Town Council, Vice Chair, Naomi Neville, would run the meeting.

Key Outcomes:

Approved the minutes of the AIRPA meeting of November 3, 2010 (Jan Eckhart moved and Keith Humphreys seconded).

Voted unanimously to approve Fred Faerber interim Chairman and Dick Adams interim Vice Chairman of AIRPA.

Agenda Items:

I. Approved the minutes of the November 3, 2010 Meeting.

II. Vote to establish Interim Leadership

- a. N. Neville and J. Oakley explained that AIRPA needed to elect temporary membership through January or until the three Aquidneck Island municipalities could appoint new members to fill vacant seats.
- b. The Board nominated and approved the election of Fred Faerber as temporary Chairman and Richard Adams as temporary Vice Chairman.

III. Review Received NOIs

- a. J. Oakley informed the Board that five NOIs were submitted by the November 22, 2010 deadline. Each of the applicants were invited to the meeting to present their applications to the Board.
 - i. Paige Bronk, Director, Planning, Zoning, Development & Inspections, presented the NOI that the City of Newport submitted to AIRPA. The city wants approximately five acres of land on the waterfront near the former Navy Hospital for a park. The park, which would be used for passive recreation, is part of the city's ongoing effort to expand and connect public waterfront access points. The Newport City Council has approved the NOI, and the federal sponsoring agency is the National Parks Service. Among the benefits the park would provide are: public waterfront access, recreational opportunities, boat transportation, and preservation of the floodplain and existing trees. The city has the capacity to maintain the park, and it has successfully acquired federal grants to fund similar projects.
 1. In response to a question, P. Bronk said that there will be no conflicts with the Aquidneck Island Special Area Management Plan, but that the project would require approval from the Coastal Resources Management Council. In response to two other questions, he said that the city would like to link the park to Washington Street but is still searching for a feasible solution, and that Cypress Street provides vehicular access to the site.
 - ii. Ron Wolanski, Director of Planning and Economic Development, discussed the NOI submitted by the Town of Middletown. It has requested approximately twenty-five acres of land in and around the existing Midway Pier to create a new park. When developed, the area will include public waterfront access, fishing pier, kayak launch, parking lot, and restrooms. In the future the park could also contain camping sites. The town has received a commitment from the RI DEM to provide funding to create the park; the town will maintain it. The National Park Service is the federal sponsor. If Middletown's NOI is successful, it plans to develop the park in two phases, the first to be completed within two years of the transfer and the second to be implemented as funding becomes available.
 1. In response to questions, R. Wolanski said that the park would not have a boat ramp, and that he did not know what affect the upcoming change in state administration would have on RIDEM's financial commitment to the park.
 - iii. Bob Gilstein, Portsmouth Town Planner, presented the town's NOI request for use of approximately four acres of Tank Farm 2 to create a multi-modal center. He said the proposed facility would be a regional planning opportunity providing

road, rail, and water links to destinations on and off Aquidneck Island. The Newport Dinner Train is relocating its offices close to the site, and it has purchased two Budd Rail Diesel Cars for use as a shuttle between Newport and Portsmouth. B. Gilstein said that the multi-modal facility would provide parking for 300 vehicles and could cost as little as \$700,000 to build.

1. In response to questions, B. Gilstein said that the meets and bounds of the property had not been done. He also said that the proposed multi-modal facility could be adjusted to allow for an extension of Burma Road.
 2. Craig Seymour of RGK added that the facility could be a simple solution to potential contamination problems at the tank farm site.
- iv. Peter Healy of RIDOT discussed the NOI the agency submitted for Defense Highway/Burma Road. He said RIDOT saw the stretch of road as a golden opportunity to preserve a scenic thoroughfare and alleviate congestion on the island. Mr. Healy added the agency had two major concerns about the site. It was worried about potential environmental contamination from a disused oil pipeline that runs under the road and the timing of any future cleanup, and it did not believe that Burma Road could serve as a useful north to south connector without a direct connection to Coddington Highway.
1. In response to questions, Mr. Healy said that RIDOT was not concerned about the utility lines under Burma Road. He also said that the US Navy would commit to cleaning up contaminants covered under CERCLA, which does not include petroleum.
 2. David Knisely, legal counsel, added that AIRPA could negotiate with the Navy on the timing of future clean-ups.
 3. A discussion ensued on how best to ease RIDOT's concerns with Burma Road. Some suggested that RI's federal delegation could become involved in order to pressure the Navy. Another suggestion was that RIDOT could take ownership of the road surface only. Someone asked what other contaminants RIDEM would look for under Burma Road. J. Oakley responded that she had begun file reviews to find more information on the issue.
- v. Alan Shears summarized the NOI submitted by Solaris Power, LLC, a non-profit organization. It has requested portions of Tank Farm 2 for use as a solar farm, solar museum, and green business incubator. A. Shears said the site was one of the best on the island for solar energy, and the creation of a solar facility and museum would help RI become known as the "renewable energy state." He added that using the site for an industrial use, such as a solar farm, would eliminate the need to clean-up any potential contaminants.
1. J. Oakley said that the Solaris Power NOI had no federal sponsor despite her efforts to find one. She suggested that the proposal might be a better fit for an economic development plan.
 2. In response to a question, Mr. Shears said that his proposal would not be feasible unless Solaris Power received the land for free or very close to free.
 3. A discussion ensued about the potential for renewable energy on the Tank Farm sites. One meeting attendee said that the Navy was planning its own renewable energy projects in the area. C. Seymour said that renewable energy was a potential use for the site because of its limitations. Rich Tenga of the OEA said that whatever the use, the Navy wants to make money on the sale of the property.

IV. Revised AIRPA Timeline

- a. J. Oakley stated that the AIRPA timeline had been revised and asked C. Seymour to discuss the changes to date.
- b. C. Seymour said that the RKG had hoped to have completed the baseline conditions report, but it had had difficulties acquiring the necessary data from the Navy. However, what has been completed to date, a preliminary draft, of the report is available for review. In this preliminary draft there is information on the BRAC transfer process which could be of interest to the Board.
- c. Currently, RKG is working with the firm of BBP to determine what potential private developers see in the surplus properties through the issuance of a Request for Interest.
- d. N. Neville suggested that each town meet with representatives from RKG, so that it can better understand the properties within its borders. J. Oakley said she would e-mail RKG's draft document and schedule meetings with each town.
- e. R. Tenga said the OEA preferred that the next AIRPA public meeting occur during the third week of January. He added that the reuse planning process was progressing well.

V. Next Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting

- a. The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on January 4, 2011. The location will be the Middletown Police Station Community Room and the meeting time is 1pm.

Vice- Chairwoman Naomi Neville adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Witt, Planning and Communications Director
Aquidneck Island Planning Commission